SUICIDE,

A

POEM.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

SUICIDE.

LIFE grown a burthen, is it beſt to fall
Self-doom'd to death—or wait frail Nature's call?
Add woe to woe, ſtill more unhappy be,
And join with grief a reſtleſs agony?

The ſpirit free'd, we leave our cares behind,
And quit the burthen of a tortur'd mind.
Religion's ſtern command forbids to kill:
The reſtleſs ſpirit, to be free from ill,

Muſt with philoſophy attend its fate,
Nor Heaven's juſt decrees anticipate.
No other guide than will, the wayward know;
Nor can Religion's voice prevent the blow:
But thoſe whom Judgement's cool reflection ſways,
Attend Time's hand to finiſh joyleſs days.
Thus ſay the wiſe, who lead the weak aſtray,
Point out the hard, but tread the flow'ry way;
Who life enjoy and paſs it as they pleaſe,
While fear beguiles the coward of his eaſe,
Pour forth the tales of fiction and deceit,
The teacher and the leſſon both a cheat.

Whene'er life's fretful taſk uneaſy grows,
I'll quit the earth, and ſeek a wiſh'd repoſe;
There in full bliſs unbroken joys attend,
And bleſs the hand which brought me to an end.

Why do we mourn our friend call'd hence by death?
Why with a willow weave a mournful wreath?

Why flow thoſe tears for him who knows not grief?
Stop, ſtop the ſtream---it carries no relief.
Sickneſs no more ſhall rack his tortur'd mind;
Thoſe woes are paſt; like us, they're left behind.
Then rather mourn for them whoſe abject fear
Makes painful life too precious, and too dear;
Whoſe blind belief forbids the dagger's aid,
And keeps in fear the wretch too much afraid.

Why is this noiſe? whence all this wonted ſtrife?
Why are we fond of trouble, toil, and life?
Is pain ſo pleaſing then? What is't we fear?
To ſeek true joy, and leave misfortune here?
To quit this world, where Pride and Hatred dwell,
This more than all we're told, or fear, of hell?
Here ſubtle arts ſeduce the bluſhing maid,
And add to poverty, ſhame's ſinking aid.
Profeſſing Friendſhip falſe betrays belief,
Shunning withholds the promis'd look'd relief.

Here Horror ſtalks with Folly in her train;
Her fall alike the modeſt and the vain;
While marriage vows, at ſacred altars made,
Neglected lie, and huſbands are betray'd.
Oppreſſion's hand in ev'ry ſtate you'll find,
And thouſand thouſand woes torment mankind.
Here Winter's nipping, piercing froſt ſhall blaſt
The wretch on Fortune's frail protection caſt;
While Summer's fierce and ſcorching heat ſhall burn
The orphan offspring, while the wretches mourn.

The rich man, born to indolence and ſtate,
Whoſe only wiſh is that of being great,
With fortune ample, but ſo mean a ſoul,
Reſigns his liberty, and courts controul.
The fawning, cringing, minion of a court,
Depends on fav'rites, and entreats ſupport.
The wretch oppreſs'd at once by love and ſcorn,
With woe, the portion of each night and morn,

Breathes

Breathes forth his ſighs, but mourns without relief,
For love derided, and unpitied grief.
With rage and torture mad, he helpleſs ſees
Some happy rival, with more pow'r to pleaſe,
Enjoy his wiſh:—in vain are tears and ſighs;
All pale and wan, a ling'ring death he dies.
But ſhort the huſband's bliſs; for jealous fears
Perplex his mind, and fill his heart with cares:
With ſharp upbraidings both lament their fate,
And curſe the troubles of a married ſtate.
Continual jars deſtroy their peace of mind;
Too poor to part—too faithleſs to be kind.
Such are the woes which worldlings muſt endure;
Nothing is truer, nothing half ſo ſure.

The cares of riches are an endleſs curſe;
The ills of poverty and ſhame are worſe:
Want and diſtreſs are ſpurn'd from every door,
On earth no crime's like that of being poor:

For Charity, the name of Chriſtian ſerves,
While Piety befriends not him who ſtarves.
From Virtue's brow dark Falſehood plucks the wreath,
And Honor's ſullied by Detraction's breath:
Pale Famine ſuppliant begs in vain for bread;
In vain are tears by real Miſery ſhed:
Gorg'd Luxury, intent on ſelf alone,
No ſorrow knows, or pities, but its own.

Search through the world, how few you'll find,
To whom both Fate and Fortune have been kind!
What man is free from woe, or has not felt
Sorrows, which Fortune's hand to all has dealt?
Can monarchs 'ſcape from what affects the ſlave?
Is comfort known to P———a's Tyrant Knave?
Whoſe heart, unknowing virtue, and unowning fear,
Calls nothing dreadful, and holds no one dear;
Who, black with murder, perjury, and crimes,
Shall live a proverb to all future times;

Whoſe

Whoſe ſoul is black, and tainted all his fame,
While foreign powers tremble at his name:
Yet knows not eaſe; the conſcious Tyrant's dread
Of mighty vengeance falling on his head,
Torments his dreams, and makes his guilty life
A ſcene of terrors, cruelties, and ſtrife.

Imagin'd evils too perplex the brain,
Depreſs the ſoul, and cauſe the heart-felt pain.
Our only joy, is not to ſuffer grief;
On earth our cares admit but ſhort relief.

What then is life, we dread to lay it down?
What is this death, we fear to make our own?
What this inſtruction, whoſe belief miſled,
Teaches with Folly's tongue the ſimple head?
Which, once poſſeſt, will never quit its place;
But *Folly* ſtill ſhall teach with *Wiſdom*'s face.

Come then, kind Death! thou deareſt, beſt of friends,
Where joy begins, and dire misfortune ends;

Come,

Come, thou ſweet cure for all the ills of life,
The treach'rous friend, and falſe deceiving wife:
Thou bringeſt peace beyond what life can give:
This is thy power. Who then wou'd wiſh to live?
On earth is woe---in death ſure reſt we find,
With joy and happineſs to bleſs mankind.

Thus ſpoke a Libertine; and thus a Sage,
For virtue fam'd, as reverend from age:
Peace, ſimple youth, nor further blindly ſtray,
Where Vice and Irreligion mark their way.
Turn back to life, where bounteous Nature's hand
Has ſtrew'd her bleſſings by divine command;
Where Reaſon points the way to thoſe who err,
And youth from vice by virtue's rules deter;
Who leads through labyrinths the erring mind
To Virtue's path, and Happineſs refin'd;
Who, friend to merit, caſts her ray around,
Where Goodneſs moving ſanctifies the ground.

Learn

Learn then from her, whate'er you find on earth,
Whate'er from Nature has received its birth,
Is meant a good.---Let not frail mortal's ſenſe
Arraign the will of high Omnipotence.
Learn then, from life no happineſs can flow,
But thoſe true joys which virtue can beſtow.

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THE END.